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February 17, 2019
Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

Dear Members of Holy Trinity and the Chapel,

Today we open the liturgical book entitled the *Lenten Triodion*, which contains the hymns that prepare us to experience the live-saving Cross, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church will lead us on a spiritual journey, drawing us closer to God through worship, prayer, personal reflection, repentance, and almsgiving. Although we will notice the darker colors and richer prayers of the Lenten season each Sunday, the Church invites us to invest in the *daily* struggle of Lent replete with the spiritual tools of presanctified liturgies, great canons, prostrations, increased fasting, and confession that “availeth much” for our souls (*James 5:16*). How can we partake in this journey each day without a guide to lead us?

It is for this reason that our local clergy—with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek—proposed that the Parish Council hire an interim priest, in accordance with the Church’s best practices. According to the publication, *Interim Ministries: An Overview for Church Leaders*, an interim priest by definition is a clergyman with parish experience who provides pastoral guidance and support to parishes that are between rectors. The interim priest should be available for pastoral appointments two or more days during the week. Moreover, the interim pastor is not a candidate for the permanent position.

Fr. David Smith, Priest-in-Charge of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in Beavertown, and Associate Priest of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in State College, has offered himself as a candidate for this paid position and has been blessed by His Eminence to assume the role, if so desired by the parish.

The current proposal calls for Fr. David to assume the role of interim priest prior to the start of Great Lent for a period of no less than, and no more than, six months. He would be available for pastoral appointments in his office at Trinity House on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; hear Confessions prior to, and serve, the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday during Lent, and hear Confessions after the Wednesday Vespers outside of Lent; and celebrate weekday services such as Annunciation and other Feasts according to our practice, including the services of Clean Week, Holy Week, and Bright Week. On the condition of both our local clergy and the Archdiocese, neither Fr. David’s care of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, nor its current Saturday-Sunday liturgical schedule, will be disrupted. God has planted His vineyard in Snyder County and now is not the time to uproot it, a mere few years before it too can support a full-time priest.

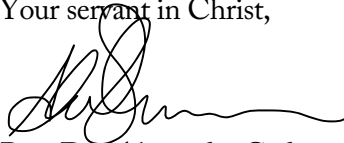
While there are many advantages of an interim priest—it allows for the parish to rediscover its identity, ministry, mission, and vision during the transition while the new rector (who remains known only to God) is vetted, assigned, and able to move in the summer between school years—a decision to hire Fr. David delays the start date of our new rector to September 1, which is the beginning of the ecclesiastical year.

To aid the Parish Council in making this decision, all members of our parish family are asked to offer their questions and feedback at a “Town Hall” meeting to be held at Holy Trinity **this Wednesday, February 20 at 7 p.m.** It will be simulcast live via video and telephone to the Chapel and for anyone in our community who is unable to attend physically. Call-in information will be shared electronically via the *This Week at Holy Trinity* and *Let Us Attend!* (Chapel) emails, posted on holytrinity-oca.org and holyspirit-oca.org, and available to anyone who calls the Parish Office at (814) 231-2855. Our Transition Team has been asked to co-chair this forum so its members, like you, can hear the full details of the proposal and ensure it is fully consistent with the goals and objectives of the rector search. If you cannot attend either in person or by teleconference, you may see a member of the clergy, ask questions and offer feedback online through the website, call the Parish Office, or email transitionteam@holytrinity-oca.org.

Thank you in advance for offering your insights. I ask that you continue to join me in prayerfully supporting His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek, our Dean Fr. Mark Meholick, our Chancellor Fr. Bill Evansky, and my fellow clergy Fr. David and Dn. Mark, during this solemn and crucial process. Today on the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, the Church is reminding us—by offering us a dispensation from fasting (even on Wednesday and Friday) this week—that Great Lent and an intense period of fasting, worship, and prayer is approaching. It is time for us to prepare for the pilgrimage ahead.

May God bless our deliberations this week and give us the wisdom, strength, peace, and power to embark on the journey toward Pascha for the salvation of our souls.

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Cadman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Dn. Alexander Cadman
Acting Administrator